

2001

ANNUAL JUDICIAL REPORT

SERVICES
FOR
MISSOURI
CITIZENS



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ROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE



Chief Justice Steven N. Limbaugh, Jr.

I am pleased to present the Missouri Judicial Report for the year ending June 30, 2001. In these pages, you will read about our efforts to improve our state's court system in a number of ways, from court automation to judicial education to court security and others. But these pages only show a glimpse of the work of the judiciary. Every day, our dedicated court staff strive to assist citizens who are filing or defending court cases, serving on juries, and participating in hearings and trials. And every day, our judges show their commitment to an efficient and just system of law as they preside over difficult legal disputes in criminal, civil, and family court cases. We are indeed honored to serve!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steven N. Limbaugh, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

HOW ARE WE HELPING

STATE BUDGET ISSUES?



In January 2001, the governor announced a reduction of 91.5 full-time employees in the circuit courts effective July 1, 2001. The Circuit Court Budget Committee immediately imposed a hiring freeze in the circuit courts. As a result of the Committee's actions, the circuit courts were able to absorb the budget reductions through attrition, thus avoiding laying off employees.

The Circuit Court Budget Committee also approved the Resources of Experienced Professional Staff program this year, which allows courts to hire former employees on a temporary basis at an hourly rate equivalent to the pay step and range occupied when the employee resigned or retired. Individuals who have resigned or retired within the past five years and who have at least four years of experience may participate.

Close to 50 former court employees applied to participate, and nearly 8,000 hours of temporary assistance were provided by employees in the program. Courts that have participated in the program have been very appreciative of the assistance provided by individuals who are familiar with the court system and require little or no training. Former court employees who have worked under the program also have been very complimentary.

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS HELPING YOUR COURT

PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE

The Missouri
Judiciary's vision of
utilizing a family of
automated systems
and advanced
technologies to
provide improved
service, fair and
equitable justice,
and increased
public access to the
Judiciary is truly
being
accomplished.

All but four of Missouri's 114 counties now use the same hardware, software, networks, and communication software. One hundred and eight counties that have juvenile courts, offices, and/or residential facilities now have computers, printers, software, and network connections as well.

Twenty-six additional counties began using Missouri's newly renamed case management system—ACS Justice Information System (JIS)—this fiscal year, bringing the total number of courts to 53. JIS will be piloted in a juvenile court in the coming year. Eventually, all juvenile courts will use JIS, allowing for a standardization of software statewide.

Personnel from courts using JIS are involved with automation changes in their courts. Staff attended user evaluation sessions this year to provide feedback and prioritize any changes desired. Through these sessions, JIS was developed to meet the needs of court staff and provide one supported version of the software.

ACCESS TO CASE INFORMATION

The most popular benefit of Missouri's court automation effort is the software, Case.Net, which allows lawyers, litigants, abstractors, media, and anyone from the general public to view public case information from the Internet without making a trip to the courthouse. A total of 36 courts now post their information on Case.Net.

SHARING INFORMATION FOR SAFETY

Now that half of Missouri courts are using the statewide automated case management system, the Office of State Courts Administrator has been meeting with other state agencies to discuss opportunities for electronic transfer of shared data.

During this fiscal year, a technical partnership was created with the Missouri State Highway Patrol resulting in the transfer of information between JIS and the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES). As a result of this link, law enforcement is now provided with near-real time access to court information that before arrived in a less timely manner via paper form only. The next step for this information sharing project will be pilot of the electronic transfer of ex parte adult protection orders.

EASIER MANAGEMENT OF JURY DUTY

Twenty-six counties now have help managing jury duty thanks to installation of software known as ACS Juror Management System (JMS) after a successful pilot in St. Charles, Franklin, Gasconade, Osage, and Jackson Counties this fiscal year. The software was selected as the statewide standard jury software by court staff representatives from a sampling of small, medium, and large courts.

Court staff who use JMS can create jury pools, edit participant records, print summonses, print reports and notification postcards, postpone attendance dates, scan daily attendance using bar code scanners, provide seating charts for voir dire and trials, issue certificates of recognition, pay jurors and panel members on demand or through an accounts payable download, and inform jurors of service using interactive voice response. JMS has been received extremely well by the courts, and 104 counties have requested the software when no more than 20 were originally anticipated.

DIGITAL SOUND RECORDING

Digital sound recording was piloted in St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Callaway County, and Cole County this year. Evaluations on the recording system from the four sites were generally positive, and participants indicated they would recommend digital sound recording to other courts. Specifications for use of digital sound recording are being developed to ensure courts contract with that vendor having the best product and service at an affordable price.



“court-based,
problem-solving
initiatives that seek
to address
root causes”

FOR DRUG ABUSE AND MENTAL ILLNESS

The last decade has seen a growing number of court-based, problem-solving initiatives that seek to address root causes that contribute to criminal involvement of persons in the criminal justice population. While breaking ground for other hands-on judicial treatment innovations, the drug court model has itself continued to evolve to address substance-abusing court populations across the country. This fiscal year, Missouri's drug courts grew in number to a total of 34. Legislation was passed and signed creating a Drug Court Coordinating Commission, and a Drug Court Resource Fund as well. A process evaluation by the University of Missouri, completed this year on 14 operational drug court programs, will provide each program with information on how to improve the drug court process to enable greater success for participants.

The judicial problem-solving methodology originating in drug courts has been adapted to address other serious problems associated with large numbers of persons in the criminal case load. One of the most challenging applications of the therapeutically oriented judicial approach—the mental health court—has focused on the mentally ill and disabled in the criminal justice population. Mental health courts have responded to both the critical problems faced by the mentally ill in already overcrowded jails, and the relatively common co-occurrence of mental illness among the large numbers of substance abusers. Local jails, struggling for decades to deal with chronic overcrowding, have been particularly challenged by the need to care for large numbers of mentally ill persons found in their charge. This fiscal year, the first two mental health courts in Missouri became operational.

WHAT WE'RE DOING TO HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



DOMESTIC RELATIONS CASES

The Commission on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services in Domestic Relations Cases continues to review and make recommendations for improvement or revision in the areas of availability, quality, and utilization of court ADR programs and services; statewide program coordination and support; and standards, qualifications, and training of mediators.

Ten family courts in conjunction with the Division of Child Support Enforcement received funding and provided mediation services that helped over 600 parents resolve problems relating to custody and visitation. Over 65% of the parents served were Title IV-E eligible. Custody and visitation problems left unresolved often lead to difficulty in establishing or paying child support. Mediation services are offered pre and post-dissolution and to never married parents, and may include an educational component for parents and/or parents and children designed to help the family understand the effect of divorce and a changing family situation on children.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES

Three Missouri circuits are piloting a federally-funded project aimed at improving case management in child abuse and neglect cases, and resulting in timely placement of all abused and neglected children in permanent homes. Other goals of the pilot are to assess the impact of both federal and state legislative reforms on the juvenile courts, describe the effectiveness of courts in implementing reforms both in letter and in spirit, make recommendations for improvement, and develop and implement a plan for improvement, which will result in timely, full and fair proceedings for children and their families.

A NEW APPROACH-THE UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

Consolidation of all cases relating to the family is the focus of the Unified Family Court Pilot in St. Louis City. A Specialized Services Department has been developed that provides programs such as victim/offender mediation, child abuse and neglect mediation, shoplifting group, and anger management. A truancy initiative with five dockets at local schools also has been developed. Judicial officers are collecting data for statistical analysis of case disposition time frames.

JUVENILES AT RISK

Ten juvenile and family courts are using a standardized method of assessing juvenile offenders according to their level of risk for future delinquency and linking them to sanctions designed to reduce that risk potential. Treatment needs are also identified. A software product developed to automate the standardized tool is now providing juvenile courts with the first court-collected statistics on juvenile offenders in Missouri.



HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

IN MISSOURI'S COMMUNITIES

Missouri's courts spent \$47,000 of the \$50,000 dollars allocated by the legislature this fiscal year for foreign language interpreters. Certification of Spanish language interpreters alone is a high priority as 2000 census data on Missouri's Hispanic population indicates a 92.3% increase during the last decade. The population of the entire state only increased by slightly more than nine percent. Barry, Sullivan, and McDonald Counties each experienced Hispanic population growth of over 1000%.

Eight interpreters completed the Spanish interpreter certification process by attending a two-day workshop and passing a three-part examination scoring at least a 70% on each part. Nine interpreters passed one or two parts of the three-part examination. A two-day advanced skillsbuilding workshop is provided for interpreters who participate in the basic orientation but do not pass the examination. Every effort is being made to increase interpreter proficiency and ensure all Spanish-speaking individuals can participate fully in their proceedings.

To enhance equal access to the judicial system by individuals with disabilities and to help the courts comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Supreme Court Commission on the Courts and the Disabled was formed. Made up of judges and members of the community (including individuals with disabilities), the Commission is charged with reviewing facilities and operations of the courts and recommending changes that will enhance the ease of accessibility.

This fiscal year, on-site assessments or telephone surveys on accessibility were completed in 50 courts. Funding was provided for sign language interpreters and/or auxiliary aids for the deaf/hard of hearing in all cases. Statewide intranet access for all court personnel to the names of certified deaf interpreters and statewide distribution of 60 infrared Assistive Listening Devices for use by hard of hearing individuals also was provided.

EASIER COLLECTION OF COURT FINES

The Fine Collection Center (FCC) was created to reduce the administrative burden on local court clerks by freeing up their time for other court duties. The FCC currently is processing traffic offenses and conservation offenses for a total of 51 counties, with additional counties expected to participate. The counties still receive all fines and the county share of costs and fees, but are no longer tied down to spending large amounts of time processing non-contested traffic tickets. Added benefits of participation in the FCC include uniform fines statewide, better accountability, and improved collection rates.

Currently, the FCC is processing up to 10,000 traffic citations per month. This fiscal year alone, \$5.7 million in fines and costs were collected, and 100,000 cases were processed. Since inception, \$8.8 million in fines and costs have been collected and 153,000 cases have been processed. Cases are transferred electronically from the FCC to member counties utilizing JIS court software.



ASSESSING SECURITY ISSUES IN YOUR COURT

Our Court Security Assistance Program is designed to assist courts in improving their security and emergency policies and procedures through a complete assessment of the current security environment in a jurisdiction.

This fiscal year, on-site assessments were completed in eleven counties. Each assessment incorporated a review of existing policies and procedures to identify potential vulnerabilities and provide viable recommendations to maintain a safe, secure environment for judicial operations and the protection of the court's records and property. Additionally, coordinated recommendations on security, access, information systems, and operations also was provided to four judges in counties planning or constructing new courthouses.

Security evaluations also were conducted in five juvenile offices this fiscal year. The initial effort focused on juvenile offices located outside the courthouse or detention centers located in isolated areas not benefiting from security measures being added to courthouses. A security checklist was developed to assist juvenile officers with conducting assessments in their own facilities.

EDUCATIONAL

OPPORTUNITIES FOR

MISSOURI COURT PERSONNEL



During this fiscal year, the Division of Judicial Department Education continued to provide exceptional educational services for court personnel. Over 2600 judiciary employees attended educational training on such topics as Advanced Judicial Studies on Genetics, Regional Seminars for municipal judges, Appellate Forum for appellate judges, a Victim's Rights Seminar, "Barjing into Detention," Court Clerk College, New Clerk Orientation, Internet Research, and Supervision and Management Certification Programs. Tuition reimbursement and scholarship programs also were made available to court personnel.

New technology made educational programming and meetings easier through videoconferencing, and satellite broadcasts helped those unable to travel to a Judicial Department Education training facility still receive training.

An on-line course—Balanced Approach and Restorative Justice—was piloted and then offered nationally to juvenile justice professionals. Collaboration with national justice agencies allowed Missouri judicial employees a chance to participate in an on-line course on leadership as well.

The Missouri Judicial Report is prepared by:

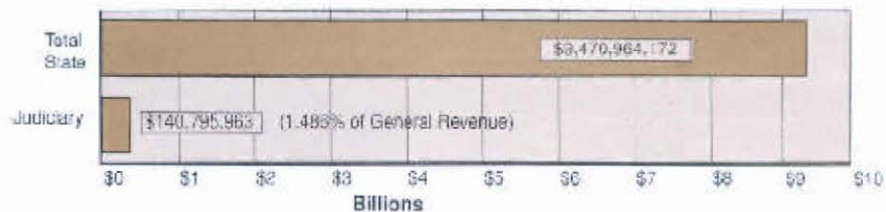
Office of State Courts Administrator
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Caseload statistics for the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Circuit Court, by county and judicial circuit, are published separately in "The Missouri Judicial Report Supplement," which is available upon request from the Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA). Also available from OSCA is the "Summary of Selected Bills Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed by the 90th General Assembly."

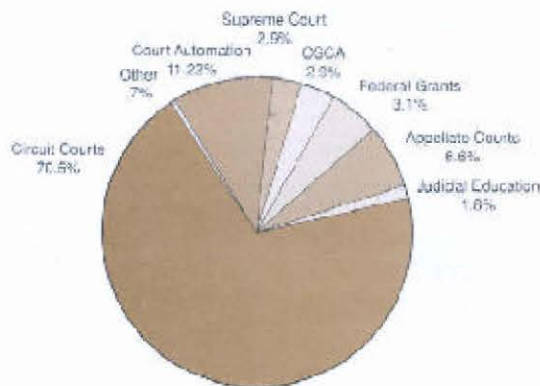
A Learning Management System was purchased this fiscal year, and training and testing completed.

FINANCIAL

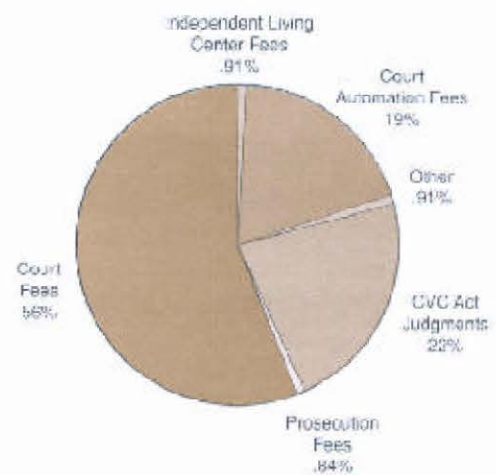
FY 2001 General Revenue Expenditures



Judiciary Budget Breakdown



Collections by the Judiciary



Approximately 46,169 Crime Victims Compensation Act judgments were assessed in FY 2001.

CASE PROCESSING

Case Processing Time Standards Age of Case At Disposition FY 2001

Time Standard Category	Standard for Age of Case at Disposition in the State	Actual Performance Statewide	Percent Change from FY 2000	Circuits Meeting Both Standards in FY 2001
Circuit Civil				
In 18 months	90%	78%	-2%	14, 19
In 24 months	98%	87%	0%	
Domestic Relations				
In 8 months	90%	81%	-3%	
In 12 months	98%	89%	-1%	
Circuit Felony				
In 8 months	90%	85%	1%	11, 13, 32, 36
In 12 months	98%	92%	0%	
Associate Civil				
In 6 months	90%	85%	0%	1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 14, 18, 23, 25, 26, 30, 32, 34, 35, 39, 44, 45
In 12 months	98%	96%	2%	
Associate Criminal				
In 4 months	90%	77%	1%	2
In 6 months	98%	83%	2%	

CASELOAD STATISTICS

Caseload Statistics - FY 2001					
	Filed	Disposed	Pending End	Disposed/ Filed Ratio	Pending/ Disposed Ratio
CIVIL					
General Civil	31,792	31,189	33,512	0.98	1.07
Domestic Relations	99,808	100,465	50,681	1.01	0.50
Chapter 517	132,435	130,294	42,021	0.98	0.32
Small Claims	18,966	19,070	5,457	1.01	0.29
Subtotal	283,001	281,018	131,671	0.99	0.47
CRIMINAL					
Felony	32,228	30,405	20,767	0.94	0.68
Felony Preliminaries	52,240	46,582	38,518	0.89	0.83
Misdemeanors	125,305	115,823	126,985	0.92	1.10
Traffic*	303,711	296,313	199,816	0.98	0.67
Ordinance	19,820	18,398	8,931	0.93	0.49
Municipal Cert./TDN	4,308	3,484	1,873	0.81	0.54
Subtotal	537,612	511,005	396,890	0.95	0.78
JUVENILE					
	37,411	35,530	18,188	0.95	0.51
PROBATE					
Decedents' Estates	5,461	5,356	11,638	0.98	2.17
Incap./Disabled Estates	2,893	2,332	21,356	0.81	9.16
Minor Estates	2,952	1,735	11,769	0.59	6.78
Mental Health Petitions	2,669	2,577	787	0.97	0.31
Probable Cause Petitions*	46	24	59	0.52	2.46
Subtotal	14,021	12,024	45,609	0.86	3.79
TOTAL	872,045	839,577	592,358	0.96	0.71

*Traffic caseload does not include cases reported by the Fine Collection Center.

Fine Collection Center:

- 99,793 cases were filed
- 58,187 cases were disposed by guilty plea
- 25,515 cases were returned due to no response
- 16,288 cases were returned due to a not guilty plea
- 7,762 cases were pending as of the end of FY 2001.

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